

REMARKS

This communication is in response to the outstanding Office Action in this matter, which was mailed on August 19, 2008. In the Action claims 1-35 were pending and all of the pending claims were rejected. By this communication, claims 1 and 24 are amended. Applicants respectfully submit that, in view of the claim amendments and remarks herein, claims 1-35 are in condition for Allowance.

*Objection to the Specification*

On page 2 of the Action, the specification is objected to because a number of alleged informalities. By this response, the specification has been amended to address the alleged informalities. No new matter has been added to the specification.

*Claim Rejections 35 U.S.C. § 102*

Claims 1-9, 19 and 21-28 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Pat. Pub. No. 2002/0143692 of Heimermann et al. (hereinafter “Heimermann”). Of these claims, claims 1, 19, and 24 are independent claims.

Claim 1 has been amended to clarify its patentable subject matter. Claim 1 is directed toward a computer implemented method of responding to a request for a supplier quotation, known as an RFQ. The method includes accessing an index having entries, each entry including information related to one of a plurality of RFQs. The RFQs being generated by a plurality of requesters and information related to the RFQs being provided to the index, wherein at least one of the plurality of requesters is located remote from the index. The method further includes identifying an RFQ for reply, by identifying an entry in the index, retrieving the identified RFQ from a data store located at one of the plurality of requesters located remote from the index, and generating a reply to the retrieved RFQ.

Applicant submits that Heimermann fails to teach or suggest all of the recited features of claim 1. More particularly, Applicant submits that Heimermann fails to teach

accessing an index of the type recited in claim 1 to identify an RFQ for reply and then retrieving the RFQ from a data store located at one of the plurality of requesters located remote from the index. Heimerman teaches at paragraph 180, an external module, which apparently includes all of the RFQs. There is no indication that Heimermann teaches accessing an index that includes information about RFQs and retrieving an identified RFQ from a data store located at one of the plurality of requesters located remote from the index. For at least these reasons, Applicant submits that claim 1 is allowable over the cited reference. Claims 2-9 depend from claim 1 and are also believed to be allowable.

Claim 19 is directed toward a computer implemented method of indexing RFQs. Each of the RFQs is generated by a requester and includes job information indicative of terms for delivery of goods or services from a supplier to the requester. The method includes receiving indexing information from the requesters, the indexing information being indicative of the RFQs. The method further includes entering an entry for each RFQ in an index based on the index information, the entry being indicative of a category of a corresponding RFQ and a location of the corresponding RFQ on a data store at the requester, the index being exposed to access by suppliers.

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of claim 19. Claim 19 specifically recites receiving index information and entering an entry that is indicative of a location of a corresponding RFQ. As discussed above, Heimerman fails to teach or suggest a method that includes accessing an index of RFQs of the type recited in claim 1 and in claim 19. Furthermore, there is no indication that Heimermann teaches that such an index includes information about a location of RFQs on a data store at the requester. Heimermann merely appears to teach a module that includes a collection of RFQs that are exposed to access by suppliers. This alone does not teach accessing the index and entering entries in such an index to identify locations at a requester where the actual RFQs can be found. Therefore, Applicant submits that claim 19 is allowable over Heimermann. In addition, claims 21-23, which depend from claim 19 are also believed to be allowable.

Claim 24 has been amended to clarify its patentable subject matter. Claim 24 is directed toward a system for responding to an RFQ generated by at least one requester and indicative of terms for delivery of goods or services by the supplier. The system includes an RFQ reply engine configured to access an index of RFQs, identify an RFQ for reply, retrieve the identified RFQ from a data store at a requester the data store being remote from a location of the index, and generate a reply to the retrieved RFQ. As discussed above, Heimermann fails to teach or suggest an index of the type recited in claim 24. Therefore, Applicant submits that claim 24 is allowable over the cited reference. Claims 25-28 depend from claim 24 are also believed to be allowable. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

**Claim Rejections 35 U.S.C. § 102**

Claims 10-18 and 29-34 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Heimermann in view of U.S. Pat No. 5,893,076 of Hafner et al. Claims 10-18 depends from claim 1, which is believed to be allowable. Therefore, Applicant submits that claims 10-18 are allowable. Claims 29-34 depend from claim 24, which is believed to be allowable. Therefore, Applicant submits that claims 29-34 are allowable and respectfully requests that the rejection be withdrawn.

Claim 20 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Heimermann in view of U.S. Pat No. 7,251,628 of Edlund et al. Claim 20 depends from claim 19, which is believed to be allowable. Claim 20 is also, therefore, believed to be allowable. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

**Summary**

All of the pending claims are in condition for Allowance. Applicants respectfully request a Notice of Allowance.

The Director is authorized to charge any fee deficiency required by this paper or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 23-1123.

Respectfully submitted,

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